

# News Release



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## RACING RETURNS TO CHURCHILL DOWNS THURSDAY AT 5 P.M. FOR ACTION-PACKED 12-DAY SEPTEMBER MEET

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2021)** – Horse racing on the booming Kentucky circuit shifts to Churchill Downs on Thursday, Sept. 16 with the first of three **Twilight Thursday** programs at 5 p.m. (all times Eastern) as the famed Louisville racetrack opens its ninth **September Meet** for an action-packed 12-date run through Sunday, Oct. 3.

Thursday's eight-race opener lured 82 entries, including a field of eight fillies and mares for the featured seventh race, a \$134,000 second-level allowance at 1 1/8 miles. The program also has a first-level allowance for 3-year-olds and up at 6 1/2 furlongs (Race 6) and a \$120,000 maiden special weight for 2-year-olds at six furlongs (Race 5).

Each of the September Meet's 117 scheduled races will be contested on the main dirt track. In July, Churchill Downs began work to install a new \$10 million turf course that will be ready for turf racing to resume at the start of the 2022 Spring Meet.

Horsemen will compete for more than \$12.3 million (all purses include prize money from the **Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund**) offered in Vice President of Racing **Ben Huffman**'s September Meet condition book, including an 11-race stakes schedule cumulatively worth \$3.26 million.

Five stakes races, including two important fixtures for juveniles that could produce starters in this year's Breeders' Cup and next spring's Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I) and the Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI), will be showcased in primetime under the lights on Saturday as part of **Downs After Dark presented by Budweiser**.

The \$300,000 Iroquois (GIII) kicks off the "Road to the Kentucky Derby" series (Top 4 Points: 10-4-2-1), while the \$300,000 Pocahontas (GIII) starts the "Road to the Kentucky Oaks" (Top 4 Points: 10-4-2-1). Additionally, both 1 1/16-mile races are Breeders' Cup "Win and You're In" Challenge events, which means the winners will receive automatic berths in the starting gate for their respective Breeders' Cup races on Nov. 5 at Del Mar with full entry fees and travel expenses paid.

Two Saratoga maiden winners are under consideration for the Iroquois: the **Todd Pletcher**-trained **Major General** and **Stellar Tap**, who gave Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen** his North American record-breaking 9,446<sup>th</sup> career win. Ellis Park Juvenile one-two, **Roger McQueen** and **Lucky Boss**, and Ellis Park maiden winner **Guntown** also could run. **Hidden Connection**, a fast 7 1/2-length winner in her debut at Colonial Downs for trainer **Bret Calhoun**, and trainer **Norm Casse**'s Debutante runner-up **Ontheonesandtwos** are among the fillies likely to run in the Pocahontas.

Meanwhile Distaff and Filly & Mare Sprint prospects may surface in a pair of Saturday stakes for fillies and mares, the \$400,000 Locust Grove (GIII) over 1 1/16 miles and the \$300,000 Open Mind (Listed) at six furlongs. Last year's Kentucky Oaks (GI) winner **Shedaresthedevel**, winner of this year's La Troienne (GI) and Clement L. Hirsch (GI) for trainer **Brad Cox**, is likely to headline the Locust Grove against trainer **Kenny McPeek**'s **Envoutante**, who won last year's Falls City (GII) and this year's Shawnee at Churchill Downs. Winning Colors (GIII) winner **Sconsin**, conditioned by **Greg Foley**, is expected for the Open Mind.

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The inaugural \$275,000 Louisville Thoroughbred Society, an open sprint for 3-year-olds and up at six furlongs, wraps the stakes-laden program. Streaking stakes winner **Bango**, trained by Foley, is expected to run in pursuit of his seventh Churchill Downs victory.

Entries for Saturday night's 11-race card will be taken Wednesday morning.

Thoroughbred Racing will meet Louisville Cardinals Basketball when **Louisville Live**, the **University of Louisville**'s annual preseason basketball event, comes to Churchill Downs for Downs After Dark. To celebrate the theme of "**Horses & Hoops**," fans are encouraged to wear Cardinals gear to this one-of-a-kind experience that will bring together two Louisville sports legacies under the famed Twin Spires. Gates will open at 5 p.m. with the first race scheduled to begin at 6 p.m.

Other marque events during the September Meet include the \$275,000 Dogwood (GIII) for 3-year-old fillies at seven furlongs on Saturday, Sept. 25. The eventual Champion Female Sprinter **Covfefe** used the race in 2019 as a springboard to a successful run in the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Sprint (GI) at Santa Anita. Also on Sept. 25 are the newly-created \$275,000 Bourbon Trail for 3-year-olds at 1 3/16 miles and \$275,000 Harrods Creek for 3-year-olds at seven furlongs.

Closing weekend is anchored by the \$400,000 Lukas Classic (GIII) for 3-year-olds and up at 1 1/8 miles and honors Hall of Fame trainer **D. Wayne Lukas**, the iconic four-time winner of the Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks and conditioner of 26 Eclipse Award-winning champions who has been based at Churchill Downs' Barn 44 since 1989.

**Knicks Go**, the top-ranked horse in the NTRA Top Thoroughbred Poll after convincing wins in this year's Pegasus World Cup (GI) at Gulfstream Park and Whitney (GI) at Saratoga, is expected to prep for the Breeders' Cup's \$6 million Longines Classic in the Saturday, Oct. 2 Lukas Classic, according to Cox.

Also run that day is the \$300,000 Ack Ack (GIII) for Dirt Mile prospects. The new \$160,000 Seneca Overnight Stakes for 3-year-old fillies at 1 1/16 miles will be run Friday, Oct. 1.

### ***Racing Thursday-Sunday***

Churchill Downs' 12-day meet will be staged over three weekends through Sunday, Oct. 2 with racing on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Outside of the three Twilight Thursdays (5 p.m.) and Saturday night's lone Downs After Dark (6 p.m.), the first race for all other race days will be 12:45 p.m. (admission gates open at 11:30 a.m.). Eight races are scheduled on Thursdays with 10-race programs on Fridays and Sundays. Eleven races will be showcased each Saturday.

### ***Ideal Weather: Mostly Sunny Skies, Mid 80s***

Opening weekend weather in Louisville will be summerlike, according to the **National Weather Service**, with a forecast of mostly sunny skies and temperatures in the mid-80s Thursday through Sunday and a minimal chance of isolated popup showers.

### ***New Turf Course Coming in Spring 2022***

Racing at Churchill Downs during the 2021 September and Fall Meets will be exclusively run on the main dirt track. In July, Churchill Downs began work to install a new **\$10 million turf course** that will be ready for turf racing to resume at the start of the 2022 Spring Meet.

More than 41,000 tons of grass and dirt was removed, a state-of-art irrigation and drainage system was installed and the subsurface was redesigned to utilize the full width and banking in the turns to widen the course to 85 feet which will allow four racing lanes that range from 0 to 36 feet out and as many as 14 participants per race.

Currently, a large mound of root zone mix, a blend of soil and horticulture sand located in the infield on the far turn, continues to shrink daily as it's being laid as a base for the new sod. Tahoma 31 Bermudagrass overseeded with ryegrass will be planted Monday, Oct. 4 immediately after the conclusion of the September Meet.

Construction also continues on the new **Homestretch Club**, which will renovate and update the grandstand area in the former sections 120-123 and 220-223. The capital project will deliver 30 Trackside Lounges, 66 Terraced Dining Tables, 2,610 Stadium Club seats, five private VIP Hospitality Lounges and 18,600 sq. ft. of new interior premium hospitality space with air conditioning, a 100 ft. bar and a grand staircase. The project will provide 3,250 all-inclusive seats for the 2022 Kentucky Derby.

Additionally, some demolition work was completed for the new **Turn 1 Experience**, which will bring 5,100 all-inclusive permanent stadium seats and a climate-controlled hospitality venue for an additional 2,000 guests. That project will be complete for the 2023 Kentucky Derby.

### **2021 Churchill Downs September Meet Stakes Schedule**

Date	Running	Grade	Purse	Race	Conditions	Distance	Surface
Saturday, Sept. 18	37 <sup>th</sup>	III	\$400,000	Locust Grove	3&up, f&rm	1 1/16 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 18	40 <sup>th</sup>	III	\$300,000	Iroquois	2yo	1 1/16 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 18	53 <sup>rd</sup>	III	\$300,000	Pocahontas	2yo f	1 1/16 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 18	12 <sup>th</sup>	Listed	\$300,000	Open Mind	3&up, f&rm	6 F	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 18	1 <sup>st</sup>		\$275,000	Louisville Thoroughbred Society	3&up	6 F	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 25	46 <sup>th</sup>	Listed	\$275,000	Dogwood	3yo f	7 F	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 25	1 <sup>st</sup>		\$275,000	Bourbon Trail	3yo	1 3/16 M	Dirt
Saturday, Sept. 25	1 <sup>st</sup>		\$275,000	Harrods Creek	3yo	7 F	Dirt
Friday, Oct. 1	1 <sup>st</sup>		\$160,000	Seneca Overnight Stakes	3yo f	1 1/16 M	Dirt
Saturday, Oct. 2	8 <sup>th</sup>	III	\$400,000	Lukas Classic	3&up	1 1/8 M	Dirt
Saturday, Oct. 2	29 <sup>th</sup>	III	\$300,000	Ack Ack	3&up	1 M	Dirt

\* All purses include prize money from the Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund

### **Popular 5 p.m. 'Twilight Thursdays' Return With \$1 Beer, Live Music, Food Trucks**

The three **Twilight Thursdays presented by Blue Moon** in Churchill Downs' Plaza from 5-8 p.m. will feature \$1 Blue Moon drafts and \$1 select domestic beers, live music (**Carly Johnson** on Sept. 16, **Kr8vN8vs** on Sept. 23 and **Roadie** on Sept. 30), and food trucks: **The Burger Joint** (Sept. 16 and 30), **Copper Kitchen Taco Truck** (Sept. 16 and 30), **Eatz Vietnamese** (Sept. 23), **FlavaVille** (Sept. 16, 23 and 30), **Hot Buns** (Sept. 16 and 23), **Lil Cheezers** (Sept. 23 and 30), **Mark's Feed Store** (Sept. 16, 23 and 30), **Red Top Gourmet Hot Dogs** (Sept. 23 and 30) and **Smok'N Cantina** (Sept. 16).

### **Downs After Dark, Louisville Live on Saturday Night**

The lone **Downs After Dark presented by Budweiser** on Saturday, Sept. 18 will bring together two Louisville sports legacies under the famed Twin Spires.

Thoroughbred Racing will meet Louisville Cardinals Basketball when **Louisville Live**, the **University of Louisville**'s annual preseason basketball event, comes to Churchill Downs for Downs After Dark.

To celebrate the theme of “**Horses & Hoops**,” fans are encouraged to wear Cardinals gear to this one-of-a-kind experience. Gates will open at 5 p.m. and the first race is 6 p.m. The spacious 30,000-square-foot Plaza adjacent to the saddling paddock will showcase pulsating live entertainment featuring the Cardinals’ men’s and women’s basketball teams on a portable court. The entertainment line-up will include official DJ for the Louisville Cardinals, **DJ K-Dogg**, who will spin game-time favorites from the Plaza stage.

UofL’s 1986 NCAA Championship men’s basketball team, guided by then future Hall of Fame Coach **Denny Crum**, will participate in the festivities and will be available to sign autographs prior to the Louisville Live main feature at 7:15 p.m.

Two specialty cocktails will be sold at the Old Forester Paddock Bar and the Spend a Buck Bar on the second floor of the Clubhouse in the Food Court: “The Cardinal Crush” and “The Slam Dunk.”

General admission to Downs After Dark is \$12 and includes an official program. Guests under the age of 18 will only be admitted to the track if accompanied by a parent or adult guardian. Limited premium dining packages are available starting at \$76 per person. Outdoor-third floor box seats are on sale for \$27 per person. Reserved seating can be purchased online at [www.ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets).

### ***Family Adventure Day Scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 26***

**Family Adventure Day** is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 26. Families are encouraged to bring the kids to Churchill Downs for a day of racing and family activities including inflatables, a petting zoo, stick horse races, face painting, Velcro wall, Cool Down Zone, video games truck and more. Special happenings include a **Churchill Charlie** walk-around meet and greet; **United States Tennis Association** (USTA) tennis workshop; interaction with the **Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s Mobile Science Activity Center**; exploring the game of golf with **First Tee**; and learning about **FBI Louisville** safety programs.

Tickets for adults and children age 3 and up are \$10 when purchased online in advance at [www.ChurchillDowns.com](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com), and include unlimited access to all kid-friendly activities through 5 p.m. Churchill Downs is also offering a Family Four Pack that includes four Family Adventure Day reserved seat tickets: \$36 (first-floor reserved) or \$44 (third-floor reserved).

### ***Betting Menu Features 20-Cent Single 6 Jackpot***

The betting menu will be the same as recent meets and includes the 20-cent minimum “**Derby City 6**” jackpot, which is offered on the last six races each day with a low 15-percent takeout. The Derby City 6 jackpot will be paid only if there is a single winning wager with six winners placed at the required minimum bet value. If there are multiple winning wagers with six winners in the six-race sequence, 90 percent of the net money wagering into the pool will be paid, and the remaining 10 percent will carry to the Derby City 6 jackpot. If there are no tickets will all six winners, 100 percent of the pool will carry to the Derby City 6 jackpot. There will be a mandatory payout on closing day.

### ***Gaffalione, Asmussen Defend September Titles***

**Tyler Gaffalione**, who won his fourth consecutive Churchill Downs riding title and fifth local crown with 47 wins during the Spring Meet, had the hot hand during last year’s September Meet with 20 wins, seven more than runner-up **Ricardo Santana Jr.**’s 13.

In addition to Gaffalione and Santana, this year’s jockey colony includes Top 100 national earnings leaders **Florent Geroux**, **Brian Hernandez Jr.**, **Adam Beschizza**, **James Graham**, **Julien Leparoux**, **Francisco Arrieta**, **Colby Hernandez**, **Corey Lanerie**, **Joe Talamo**, **Mitchell Murrill**, **Martin Garcia**, **Rafael Bejarano**, **Reylu Gutierrez**, **Miguel Mena**, **Chris Landeros**, **David Cohen** and **Kent Desormeaux**.

**Steve Asmussen**, a 24-time Churchill Downs leading trainer and the track and sport's all-time win leader, was the September Meet leader a year ago with 12 wins, four more than Eclipse Award winner **Brad Cox**, who collected his fourth Churchill Downs title this spring with 21 trips to the winner's circle.

Joining Asmussen and Cox with horses stabled at Churchill Downs are Top 100 national earnings leaders **Mike Maker, Mark Casse, Bill Mott, Karl Broberg, Saffie Joseph Jr., Robertino Diodoro, Brendan Walsh, Bret Calhoun, Michael McCarthy, Shug McGaughey, Tom Amoss, Kenny McPeek, Joe Sharp, Ian Wilkes, Dallas Stewart, Rusty Arnold, Brian Lynch, Al Stall Jr., Greg Foley, Cherie DeVaux, Chris Hartman, Ron Moquett, John Ortiz, Wayne Catalano, Mike Lauer and Eddie Kenneally**.

### ***General Admission, Reserved Seating Options***

General admission to Churchill Downs is \$5 (\$12 for Downs After Dark on Saturday, Sept. 18). Reserved box seats are \$12 (\$27 for Downs After Dark) and indoor dining options are \$39 (\$76 for Downs After Dark). Children 12 and under are admitted free when accompanied by an adult (Downs After Dark policy: no one under the age of 18 will be admitted to the track unless they are accompanied by a parent or responsible adult). Tickets can be purchased online at [www.ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets) or by calling (502) 636-4400. Face coverings for guests is recommended for all indoor areas.

### ***Sunday Brunch in Stakes Room***

On Sundays Sept. 19 and Sept. 26, Churchill Downs is offering a special **Sunday brunch special** in the Stakes Room. The \$48 package for adults and \$25 package for children includes a seat in the Stakes Room on the fourth floor of the Clubhouse and all-you-can-eat access to the brunch menu that includes scrambled eggs, biscuits and country gravy, French toast, hot brown, carved honey ham, crispy bacon, sausage patties, hash brown potatoes with peppers and onions, fresh fruit, garden vegetables, garden/spinach salad, breakfast breads and a chef's dessert display.

### ***Odds and Ends***

**Travis Stone** will describe the racing action throughout the September Meet. Veteran odds maker **Mike Battaglia** has morning line odds duty for the 47<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

### ***'Churchill Downs Today' Airs One-Hour Before First Race***

**Joe Kristufek** is Churchill Downs' on-track and simulcast host with additional race-by-race analysis to be provided by **Ed DeRosa, James Scully, Scott Shapiro** and **Brandon Stauble**.

“Churchill Downs Today,” the track’s daily racing preview program, will air one hour before the first race of the day and can be seen on-track and online at [www.TwinSpires.com](http://www.TwinSpires.com). Also, Churchill Downs Today will be streamed live on Twitter via @ChurchillDowns and YouTube.com/ChurchillDowns.

Also, horseplayers can visit [www.churchilldowns.com/racing-handicapping/handicapping/expert-picks](http://www.churchilldowns.com/racing-handicapping/handicapping/expert-picks) for Brisnet past performances along with daily expert selections from **Ed DeRosa, Joe Kristufek** and **Scott Shapiro** of TwinSpires.com and several other handicapping tips.

### ***Churchill Downs Racing Televised on ‘America’s Day at the Races’***

The racing action from Churchill Downs throughout the September Meet will be broadcast on FOX Sports’ “**America’s Day at the Races**,” which will air every race day on either **FS2** or **FS1**. Produced by the New York Racing Association, Inc. (NYRA) in partnership with FOX Sports, “America’s Day at the Races” is the acclaimed national telecast presenting coverage and analysis of the best racing from around the country.

#### ***How to Watch FS1/FS2***

##### **FS1**

- Spectrum: Ch. 71 (Spectrum Select, Spectrum Silver and Spectrum Gold packages)
- DirecTV: Ch. 219 (Entertainment, Choice, Xtra, Ultimate and Premier packages)
- DISH: Ch. 150 (America’s Top 250, America’s Top 200, America’s Top 120 Plus and America’s Top 120 packages)
- AT&T U-Verse: Ch. 652 (U200, U300 and U450 packages)
- Streaming services: Hulu, Sling (Blue or Orange+Blue) and YouTube TV

##### **FS2**

- Spectrum: Ch. 552 (Spectrum Silver and Spectrum Gold packages)
- DirecTV: Ch. 618 (Xtra, Ultimate and Premier packages)
- DISH: Ch. 149 (America’s Top 250, America’s Top 200 and America’s Top 120 Plus packages)
- AT&T U-Verse: Ch. 651 (U200, U300 and U450 packages)
- Streaming services: Hulu and YouTube TV

### ***Wager on Churchill Downs Racing via TwinSpires.com***

Racing fans are encouraged to wager on racing from Churchill Downs via [www.TwinSpires.com](http://www.TwinSpires.com), the official advance-deposit wagering service for Churchill Downs Incorporated and its family of racetracks. TwinSpires.com boasts an improved wagering experience and mobile app combining the latest technology with the ability to wager on virtually every quarter, harness and thoroughbred horse race from venues across the globe. The app provides users with smoother and more intuitive navigation, enhanced live-streaming capabilities allowing players to watch races while searching for their next wager, and all the best bonus offers, free bets, and promotions that TwinSpires.com is known for. TwinSpires.com also offers access to unmatched insight and analysis from our horse racing experts, handicappers, insiders, educators and Bloodstock Research Information Services (Brisnet).

### ***CDI CEO Carstanjen to be Honored Wednesday Night by Louisville Thoroughbred Society***

Churchill Downs Incorporated Chief Executive Officer **Bill Carstanjen** will be honored Wednesday night as the first recipient of **The Louisville Thoroughbred Society’s Stakes Race Bourbon Dinner** “Honored Guest Award.”

The dinner at The Louisville Thoroughbred Society, a premier, private club located in downtown Louisville at 209 E. Main St. that offers simulcast wagering in a stylish setting, will help kick start a grand week of Thoroughbred racing at Churchill Downs with the start of the September Meet.

“We are truly blessed to have developed such a great working relationship with Bill and his entire team at Churchill Downs,” said **Mike Schnell**, one of the three Founding Members of The Louisville Thoroughbred Society. “Without his and Churchill Downs’ support, I don’t know if our club would have been possible. But from Day One, Bill and his team have been there – every step along the way – to make this project truly come to life.”

The dinner is 6-10 p.m. and features a five-course dining experience from **Executive Chef Allan Rosenberg**. LTS members can purchase tickets to the first LTS’ Stakes Race Bourbon Dinner and Awards Program for \$195 per guest at [thelouisvillethoroughbredsociety.com](http://thelouisvillethoroughbredsociety.com) or by calling the club at (502) 416-1282.

***Asher, Winn Statue Unveiling Thursday at 11 a.m.***

Churchill Downs Racetrack will host a public ceremony to dedicate and unveil commissioned statues that honor the late **John Asher** and **Col. Matt Winn** on Thursday, Sept. 16 at 11 a.m.

The statues, sculpted by local artist **Raymond Graf**, depict Asher sitting on a horse shoe bench and talking with Winn, who oversaw the early growth of the Kentucky Derby into America's greatest race.

The statues are positioned on the north side of the saddling paddock in the Plaza areas and guest will be able to take photos on the bend in the shadow of the iconic Twin Spires.

Churchill Downs officials, Graf and members of the Asher and Winn families will be on hand.

The general public is invited to attend the ceremony free of charge. Free parking is available in the Red and White parking lots and attendees may enter through the Paddock Gate.

For more than 40 years, Asher was the voice and face of horse racing and radio broadcasting in Kentucky. He joined the Churchill Downs family in 1997 and served as Vice President of Racing Communications until his untimely passing on Aug. 27, 2018 at age 62. Asher, who always spoke of his hero Col. Matt Winn, once said, "When I get to the great day, I would be awfully happy if someone said, 'Matt Winn would've loved this guy.'"

Winn, who served as general manager and later president of Churchill Downs from 1914 until his passing at age 88 in 1949, was the driving force in the development of the Downs and a tireless promoter of his beloved Kentucky Derby.

***Additional Information***

For more information, call (502) 636-4400 or visit [www.churchilldowns.com](http://www.churchilldowns.com).

**ABOUT CHURCHILL DOWNS RACETRACK**

Churchill Downs Racetrack ("CDRT"), the world's most legendary racetrack, has been the home of The Kentucky Derby, the longest continually held annual sporting event in the United States, since 1875. Located in Louisville, CDRT features a series of themed race days during Derby Week, including the Kentucky Oaks, and conducts Thoroughbred horse racing during three race meets in the Spring, September, and the Fall. CDRT is located on 175 acres and has a one-mile dirt track, a 7/8-mile turf track, a stabling area, and provides seating for approximately 60,000 guests. The saddling paddock and the stable area has barns sufficient to accommodate 1,400 horses and a 114-room dormitory for backstretch personnel. CDRT also has a year-round simulcast wagering facility. [www.ChurchillDowns.com](http://www.ChurchillDowns.com).

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